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**THE**

**Lundby**  
OF SWEDEN

**LETTER**

**A Quarterly Newsletter Published for Members of the We Love Lundby Club**

## Lundby Expands Worldwide in the 1970s



### HISTORY OF LUNDBY OF SWEDEN Part III

Third Ten Years—1967-1977

**A**FTER THE MERGE WITH LERRO in the 1960s, Lundby started mass producing and exporting their dollhouses and furniture. By the early 1970s, the fame of Lundby of Sweden spread throughout Europe and even worldwide.

An article from December 18, 1970, "It's a Doll's Life," in the UK magazine, "Building Design," pictures an all-electric contemporary Lundby dollhouse. The author, Kerry Stephenson, writes, "...an import to Britain this year from Scandinavia is proving (to be) one of the biggest sellers. It is the Lundby doll's house, complete with

built-in electrical connections and light sockets."

Not only did Lundby continue to manufacture its "popular" dollhouse, the Gothenburg, the company introduced a room extension in 1972 and a garage extension in 1975. Always the innovator, Lundby constantly updated its dollhouse wallpapers, furniture fabrics, and colors.

In 1976 the company wowed the miniatures world when it introduced a sparkling new "super deluxe" dollhouse, the Stockholm, as well as the play garden and balcony for the Gothenburg.

Free of the financial ups and downs the company would experience in the two decades to come, Lundby employed nearly 500 people working in factories in Sweden, Germany, Denmark and England. Sources put the dollhouse production numbers between 100,000 and 300,000 a year. By 1977 Lundby was exporting dollhouses and furniture to 20 countries.

There is no doubt that the 1970s were "Golden Years" for Lundby of Sweden. ♥

Block House Inc., located in New York City, was the exclusive US importer of Lundby during most of the 1970s. Children and parents alike could not resist the excellent craftsmanship and real lighting from the safe 4-volt transformer. Photo from a 1974 Block House advertisement.

*Editor's Note: This is the third of six articles to commemorate the 60<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of Lundby of Sweden dollhouses and furniture, 1947-2007.*

## Minneapolis Exhibition Warms Hearts

**O**UTSIDE TEMPERATURES were frigid in Minneapolis, but inside the American Swedish Institute (ASI) almost 100 passionate dollhouse collectors warmed significantly during the February 7 opening of a major exhibit, titled "Small Worlds: Interior Design in Miniature."



*Big Smiles for Small Worlds... Susanne Hjelm, right, and friend Christine Kainu, who accompanied Susanne from Sweden to help with the exhibit, relax the day after the opening.*

*Continued on page 2*

## Lundby Turns 60! Voters Select "A Big Party"

We are all winners because you collectively decided the top slogan in the 60<sup>th</sup> Anniversary Slogan Contest! A retired Lundby Advent Calendar, along with a free year's membership in the WLLC, go to Reina Olthof, Kornhorn, Holland, who submitted the clever phrase, "Lundby's 60<sup>th</sup> Anniversary: A Big Party in a Small World!" Reina responded to the announcement of the contest on the club website, [www.toysmiles.com](http://www.toysmiles.com), and submitted the top slogan!

In addition to Reina's entry, we thank four other members who sent submissions to the contest: Sharon Barton, CA; Kristi Raymond, AZ; Louana Singleton, IN; and Jenni Nolan, Dublin, Ireland.

One of these four contributors was a runner-up in the voting, so she also wins a special prize. Her slogan is featured on page 4. ♥

Photo by Jan McElfish.

## Minneapolis Exhibition—

*continued from page 1*



Two WLLC members from Sweden, **Yvette Wadsted** and **Susanne Hjelm**, figured prominently in the planning and installation of the exhibit, which centers on a collection of Swedish dollhouses in 1/16<sup>th</sup> scale from the 1950s through the present, reflecting trends in Scandinavian interior design. In addition, a number of miniature 17th and 18th century Swedish period rooms and garden houses are displayed, as well as a variety of interiors courtesy of the Midwest Miniature Guild. The exhibit continues through May 13.

The “Small Worlds” exhibit features completely furnished dollhouses from the collection of Stockholm artist and writer **Yvette Wadsted**. To chronicle Scandinavian interior design from the 1950s to the present, Yvette has organized Lundby, Micki Gemla, and Brio dollhouses and furniture around themes of Midsummer, Christmas, school graduation, and a birthday party. The Micki Toy Company, owner of Lundby of Sweden’s trade name, has

also provided two contemporary dollhouses, the new Stockholm and the Småland, from its most recent series.

Yvette has written the forthcoming book “Modern Design in the Dolls’ House,” and an exhibition of her dollhouses was also shown in 2004–2005 at the Bethnal Green Museum of Childhood in London. See the Autumn 2004 issue of *The Lundby Letter* for information about that exhibit.

After a reception celebrating the opening, **Susanne Hjelm**, who owns a dollhouse store in Stockholm and traveled to Minneapolis to set up the exhibit, spoke on “Swedish Dollhouse Makers and Designers.” Her lecture focused on dollhouses as cherished playthings and hand-crafted miniatures admired as pieces of art. Susanne remarked that she was prepared for the cold winter weather (–20 degrees) because “as a Swede, you have clothes for any weather.”

Lundby collectors are encouraged to visit this captivating exhibition. If you would like more information, contact Jan McElfish at [janmc@americanswedishinst.org](mailto:janmc@americanswedishinst.org) or 612-871-4907. You can also check for museum location, schedule, and admission fees on the club website, [www.toysmiles.com](http://www.toysmiles.com).



## What’s New at Lundby

By Sue Morse

**K**RISTINA ARONSSON, Product Manager, Micki Leksaker AB, has graciously accepted our invitation to become an Advisory Member of the WLLC. Kristina has already helped our club in many ways, such as approving our use of the Lundby logos, making suggestions for tour stops in Sweden, and welcoming us to visit the Micki facility in Gemla, where product development and warehouses are located.

Kristina sends us news of two Lundby items that were launched at the Nuremberg Toy Show February 1–6. Pictured are the 2007 version of the Advent Calendar (two other designs from 2004 and 2005 are now retired) and a new Stockholm set with two armchairs and a painting, “Bambi,” by Lisa Rinneuo.

The painting is the third which Lisa has created exclusively for Lundby. For more



2007 Advent Calendar, left, and “Bambi” by Lisa Rinneuo and chairs by Box Design, right. Photos courtesy of Micki Toy Company.



information on the artist, see Patricia Harrington’s article, “Artist’s Inspiration Appeals to All Ages,” in the September 2006 issue of *The Lundby Letter*.

The arm chairs are designed after ones available in life size by the interior architects, Ann Morsing and Beban Nord of Box Design, who were commissioned to create the new 2005 Stockholm dollhouse.

We are grateful to Kristina for this breaking news. She admits that she doesn’t know much about Lundby’s history, but our new Advisory Member knows quite a bit about Lundby’s present and future!



## The Children’s Corner

By Caitlin Butchart

Greetings from England!

Two weekends ago, my mum took us to a Chinese New Year celebration. We had a great time, eating special foods, watching a traditional lion dance and getting special red sweets from an old Chinese gentleman (a bit like Father Time with a long beard). Mum says it’s important to understand other people’s beliefs and cultures so that we can have a better relationship with them and hopefully, we can gain a little peace in the world.

This got me to thinking! Easter is coming up for us, and I know that the Christian celebrations we have are nearly all taken from ancient pagan traditions. I wondered if it is the same for other countries. A short Google search later, I uncovered a whole heap of fun celebrations about Easter.

So as this is for Lundby, I thought you might be interested in a few Swedish traditions! The one I like the best was for Maundy Thursday. In Sweden it was told that witches flew off on broomsticks to dance with the devil at Blåkulla. The girls dress up as witches now and visit people’s houses with birch twigs hung with feathers, tin eggs, and ribbons to symbolize the buds and new chicks of spring. They give each other decorated eggs much like we do. In some parts of Sweden they light huge bonfires to scare the witches away as they return after their dancing!

Although they have different ways of celebrating, we all celebrate the same thing, the coming of spring. I think it’s the same with people—we are all dif-



ferent, but at the same time, we all do the same things.

Happy Chinese New Year to you all and *Glad Påsk* (Happy Easter in Swedish). ♥

Caitlin

## Lundby Connections

MEET REINA OLTHOF, our 60th Anniversary Slogan winner, and Lundby collector. Congratulations are in order! Reina is 25 years old and lives in the northern part of Holland in a small village named Kornhorn. Not only does she own a fabulous website, [www.lundby.eigenstart.nl](http://www.lundby.eigenstart.nl), but she also sent us a photo of a rare Lundby kitchen cabinet that she purchased recently. Note that the grey surface of the cabinet matches the design on the table.

This particular table was featured in a March 2006 article in *The Lundby Letter* by Yvette Wadsted. Formica patterns from the 1960s and 1970s are shown on all four of the Lundby tables. Reina, our thanks for sharing your creativity and a rare Lundby photo!



Mail Order Express has recently filled several current Lundby orders from Carolyn Frank, VA, and she highly recommends their service.

Mail Order Express is the mail order division of multi-award winning independent toy retailer, Arbon & Watts Ltd. A full and fantastic range of Lundby dollhouses, furniture, and accessories and over 15,000 other toys, games, puzzles, and crafts are available at [www.MailOrderExpress.com](http://www.MailOrderExpress.com). They advertise their Lundby products as being primarily contemporary to reflect a modern day house, but there are still classic pieces for the more traditionally inclined.

**An Unexpected Lundby Sighting Story** ... Charlene Williams, FL, reports that her daughter, Joelle, follows an animated British TV show called "Charlie and Lola" on the Disney Channel. One morning in December, Charlene also happened to be watching and she saw the little girl, Lola, playing with a dollhouse that featured two items of Lundby furniture! The dollhouse was mostly animated, except for the Lundby pieces, the Romance sofa and the stereo cabinet from the 1970s. Charlene would love to hear if anyone in the club knows more about the show's creator or illustrator. That would make for a great interview!

**Why orange instead of beige carpeting?** Charlene also asks if any other club member has an orange carpet (to match the

funky wallpaper) in the right-hand bedroom on the top floor of the Stockholm house.



Lacking Plasticote in the US, we wondered in our last issue whether the plastic paint, known to brighten discolored plastic, is obtainable in other countries. Sure enough, Stella Goodman wrote that it is sold in the UK. She says Plasticote really does work well to gloss over metal and plastic. It comes in a small paint tub which Stella is sure can be shipped. Please let her know if you are interested in buying some.

Stella's daughter is selling her Lundby collection, so stay tuned at Stella's eBay ID, bluecatmum.

Do you own both versions of the children's tables with the runic characters? Honestly, we didn't notice there were two until sharp-eyed Marion Osborne, UK, pointed them out. One has white paint surrounding the symbols and the other outline is painted black. Marion notes the round table with black was first introduced about 1977, and then both black and white versions were available in 1985.



As shown in a 1985 catalog, again the black surround is part of children's den set (Item #9752) with the bunk beds, table, pine

chairs, and blackboard, while just the white outlined table and chairs were available in Item #7508. Only the white surround set appears in the 1986 and 1987 catalogs.

Klaradal, Swedish Antiques & Furnishings, Sue and Peter Kopperman's shop in Olney, MD, will soon be decked out with Sue's finds on her 12-day January trip to Sweden. She discovered a little bit of everything including silhouettes, Vinranka china, Swedish tin pieces, original oil paintings, water colors, vintage linens, lace, a classic Swedish gold wall clock from the 1940s, costume dolls, great hand-painted vintage picture frames, and lovely Gustavian furniture from the Dalarna region.

Are you sufficiently tempted? Email Sue Kopperman at [klaradal@aol.com](mailto:klaradal@aol.com) or call her at 301/570-2557 to see when these wonderful Swedish items will arrive in the US.

The bat chairs keep coming! After the great photo in the December 2006 issue of George Mundorf's yellow Lundby bat chair, we received some photos from Peter Pehrsson of bat chairs that he created himself!

Peter explained, "I also wanted a bat chair, but it was very expensive here too. So I asked Elisabeth Lantz to measure her chair and I built one by myself. It's a bit tricky to build it, but I am pleased with the result. I fit the legs with a bit of steel wire—that's the tricky part!"



Please send more bat chair stories! ♥

## Celebrate at Lundby Gatherings

GET TO KNOW YOUR FELLOW MEMBERS and learn more about Lundby! Plans are under way for two opportunities to join your fellow WLLC members on 60<sup>th</sup> anniversary trips.

The first opportunity is a meeting on June 1-3 to tour the new Swedish embassy, the House of Sweden, in Washington, D.C., to view members' collections, and to attend the Eastern National Antique and Modern Doll Show in Gaithersburg, Maryland. Secondly, tentative arrangements are being made to offer a five to seven-day tour of Sweden in September. It would include stops in Gothenburg, Vänersborg, Stockholm, and Gemla, among others.

Preliminary sign-up forms have yielded six members for the June event and ten members for the September event. However, we need an accurate count of how many members we can actually expect, so please complete the registration forms enclosed in this mailing. If you need more information, check the club website or please email us at [toysmiles@aol.com](mailto:toysmiles@aol.com). ♥

## Members in Focus

NINTH IN A SERIES OF INTERVIEWS

PENNSYLVANIA BORN Linda Hubbard, who is retired from the banking industry and living in St. Augustine, FL, is proud of her Swedish heritage through her grandparents. However, Linda had never heard of Lundby of Sweden dollhouses until 2005 when a friend bought a Gothenburg, two extensions, and some furniture for \$10.00 in a thrift shop. Her friend sold the whole lot to Linda and that started her search for more information about Lundby. She was hooked!

Seeking more pieces, she went on eBay and purchased some Lundby items from Patricia Harrington. Linda describes her first encounter with Patricia like this, "One of the first pieces I bought on eBay was the blue Leksand corner kitchen cabinet, and when I received it, Patricia had enclosed a tiny Swedish flag with it! I had told her in an email that I had Swedish

ancestors and living relatives in Sweden. She was a big help to me when I was just getting started."

Linda continues that Patricia suggested she look online for a Lundby catalog and also explained about the



Anders and Alida Johannesson, Linda's Swedish grandparents on their wedding day.

**The Lundby Letter** is published quarterly for members of the **We Love Lundby Club**. If you have any inquiries about an article, or if you are interested in submitting a story or project of your own, please do not hesitate to write or email us.

### THE LUNDBY LETTER

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By Sue Morse

different scales of furniture and accessories. All this information was very important to Linda as a "newbie" and she's very grateful to Patricia.

Linda grew up in Landsdowne, PA, hearing stories of how her Swedish grandparents met in Braddock, PA, the place they immigrated to the US separately in 1891 and 1901. Anders and Alida Johannesson were married in 1903. While Linda's grandfather lived to be 92 years old, she never knew her grandmother, who died before she was born. Her grandfather adopted the name John Johnson in the US and the family in Sweden goes by Johansson, having dropped one of the ns and an e from the original name, Johannesson.

Obtaining decorating ideas from *The Lundby Letter* and from other members is Linda's best benefit from being a member of the WLLC. "The craft projects are great!" says Linda.

Linda's favorite Lundby pieces are a mixture of vintage and current items. They include the Leksand pieces, the paraffin ceiling lamp, the advent candle arches, and the Dutch tile stove. She would love to see the Micki Company design and produce some Swedish nostalgia pieces from the late 1800s when her grandparents lived in Sweden. Another desire of Linda's is to build a dollhouse that follows the same plan as her grandmother's ancestral home, which she visited in Sweden.

Although Linda still has ties to Pennsylvania through her sister, Karen, and her family, she is fortunate that her son and daughter and families live near St. Augustine. Her grandchildren range in age from 13-20. Linda's eBay ID is Linda5153. ♥



Photo by Edie Wilson.

A Lundby dollhouse decorates Linda's computer room in her St. Augustine condo, along with a pelican needlepoint, another one of her collecting passions since she moved to Florida in 1977. Her current project is a handmade quilt. There just aren't enough hours in the day for all of Linda's hobbies!

## Is Lundby's Gold Chair a Commemorative?

Calling all Lundby sleuths! A visitor to our website, Russell Sayer, UK, sent this photo of the Lundby gold chair with a question about whether it could be a jubilee chair to celebrate the 40<sup>th</sup> anniversary of Lundby 1947-1987. Can any of our members confirm this?



In the next issue of *The Lundby Letter* we will feature some of Lundby's other commemorative pieces. ♥

## "It's Never Too Late" for an Additional Winner

Because Jenni Nolan, Dublin, Ireland, submitted a contest slogan that was a close runner-up in the voting, she wins a free year's club membership for 2008. Jenni's slogan, "It's Never Too Late to Have a Swedish Childhood," was a favorite of Marilyn Abrams, CA, who suggested that Jenni's slogan could be appropriately used for more than one year. It just seemed to be the perfect slogan to feature when the 60<sup>th</sup> anniversary is past.

After the big party is over, it's never too late to have a Swedish childhood! Congratulations, Jenni! ♥

## Coming Up in the June 2007 Issue

- 🏠 Lundby's Fourth Ten Years—1977-1987
- 🏠 Reports on Visits to "Small Worlds" Exhibit
- 🏠 Commemorative Lundby Pieces
- 🏠 June & September Gatherings
- 🏠 Interviews